

Speaker Biographies



Cynthia Cox, MPH is Vice President at the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and Director for the Program on the ACA, where she conducts economic and policy research on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and its effects on private insurers and enrollees. Her work focuses on enrollment, pricing, and competition in the ACA's exchange markets.

Cynthia also directs the Peterson-Kaiser Health System Tracker, a partnership of the Peterson Center on Healthcare and KFF aimed at monitoring the performance of the U.S. health system over time and in relation to other large, high-income countries. Her work on this project focuses on trends in health care costs, access, and affordability, as well as measures of health care quality and outcomes.

Prior to joining KFF, she held research and advocacy positions at Columbia University Medical Center and the American Cancer Society. She also served on the Board of Directors of the Berkeley Free Clinic.

Cynthia holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of California at Berkeley and a Master of Public Health degree from Columbia University.



Emmanuel Zervos, MD, MBA is the chief of surgical oncology at Vidant Medical Center, a surgical oncologist at the Brody School of Medicine, and the vice chair of academic affairs for ECU's Department of Surgery. Dr. Zervos has dedicated his career to the study and treatment of pancreatic cancer. In 2018, Dr. Zervos was named the inaugural Raab Professor of Adult Oncology for his dedication to patient care and commitment to teaching, mentoring, and research.



Ophelia Garmon-Brown, MD, M. Div. is a woman with many gifts and talents. A physician, a minister, a volunteer, a leader — these are just a few of the hats that she wears in her daily work. But most of all, Dr. Garmon-Brown is a caregiver and advocate for the health and well-being of Charlotte community members and beyond.

Dr. Garmon-Brown was born in Detroit, Michigan. She has two children, LaShawn and Spenser, and she is the very proud grandmother of Ezekiel, Elaya, and Emmanuel.

Dr. Garmon-Brown has spent decades caring for others around the world. In her current role as Chief Community Health and Wellness Officer at Novant Health and as a board-certified family practitioner, she has touched the lives of thousands of patients from Charlotte, her home since 1980, to distant countries around the world in her work as a medical missionary.

Education and Professional Development

Dr. Garmon-Brown began her higher education at North Carolina Central University where she received a bachelor's degree in biology. After encouragement from one of her favorite professors and mentors, she decided to pursue a medical degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Garmon-Brown graduated from UNC- Chapel Hill in 1980, and she began her internship and residency in family medicine at Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte. In doing so, she became the first African-American female resident in FamilyMedicine.

After completing her residency, Dr. Garmon-Brown became a physician and partner of Metrolina Family Practice for the next six years. She then joined the prestigious Nalle Clinic, a multi-specialty group of 137 physicians. In 1996, Dr. Garmon-Brown moved into a leadership role by taking the position of Medical Director of Nalle Clinic Urgent Care.

As she continued to excel in her career, she became the Medical Director of all Presbyterian Urgent Care Centers in 2000 and Medical Director of Presbyterian Company Care in 2001. In 2007, she was promoted to Vice President of Business & Community Partnerships as well as Novant Health's Community Benefit Department. In 2012, she was promoted to Senior Vice President of Physician Services. Dr. Garmon-Brown also served as team physician for the Charlotte Sting, chair of the Presbyterian Hospital Ethics Committee and a member of the Senior Leadership Team of Presbyterian Hospital as well as Novant Medical Group for many years.

In 2003, Dr. Garmon-Brown returned to school to obtain a master's in divinity. She graduated from the Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education in fall 2007. Currently she is an active member of St. Luke Missionary Baptist Church.

Community Involvement

Armed with an insatiable appetite to help others, Dr. Garmon-Brown also is a leader in the community serving as Co-founder of the Charlotte Community Health Clinic, a free clinic for the poor and uninsured which is now a federally qualified health clinic. Formerly, she also served as Medical Director of the health clinic at the Salvation Army's Women's and Children's Shelter; and in her spare time, she also volunteered at the Charlotte Pregnancy CareCenter.

Beyond helping those across the Charlotte region, Dr. Garmon-Brown has traveled the globe as a missionary delivering free care to those in need. Through her leadership in Kenya, where she has traveled numerous times over the past 11 years, she set up a mini-health clinic. Dr. Garmon-Brown also has done medical mission work in Uganda, South Africa, Guyana, Jamaica and other locales in the United States.

Dr. Garmon-Brown has received numerous awards for her dedication and commitment to serving the community.



Lisa P. Shock, DrPH, MHS, PA-C currently works as the Executive Director, Clinical Delivery, Global Value Based Care at Babylon Health. She plays a critical role in growth as one of the leaders responsible to build the Population Health infrastructure to help Babylon deliver digital first primary care and realize both clinical and economic outcomes within risk-based contracts. Her specific responsibilities include participating in, developing, and driving clinical the digital-first primary care/telehealth delivery model and developing and implementing the interdisciplinary support teams required to monitor key program and population metrics.

Lisa is a Certified Physician Assistant with subspecialties in Geriatrics, Primary Care and Rural Health. She currently practices outpatient medicine in a skilled nursing facility in rural North Carolina and is also a part time urgent care provider. She serves on boards and committees for several state and national organizations and is a faculty member at the Kanof Institute for Physician and PA Leadership. Lisa serves on the North Carolina Institute of Medicine Board of Directors and is also the Co-Chair of the Health Policy Committee for the North Carolina Medical Society, providing leadership in medicine by uniting, serving, and representing physicians and their health care teams to enhance the health of North Carolinians.

Lisa recently completed her Doctorate in Public Health/Health Policy and Population Health Management from UNC Chapel Hill, Gillings School of Global Public Health. She has a B.A. in Neuroscience from Colgate University and her master's and Physician Assistant Certificate from Duke University.



Karen L. Smith, MD, PA is a native of rural Maryland and is a Family Physician with private solo practice in the rural community of Raeford, North Carolina. Upon completion of her Duke University Bachelor of Science degree in biology, Hahnemann University School of Medicine, and Duke FAHEC Residency training, she chose to start her professional practice of medicine in North Carolina. She has been a part of the Hoke County community for 26 years and has successfully implemented electronic health records as a part of her delivery of care since 2003, allowing acute, chronic, and preventive services for her diverse patient population from birth to end of life.

Recognizing the needs of her patient population reached beyond the exam room, Dr. Smith became involved with the North Carolina Academy of Family Physicians (NCAFP) and the North Carolina Medical Society where she served in all levels of the NCAFP with subsequently becoming president of the organization in 2005, and she currently serves as the delegate to the American Academy of Family Physicians. She has served the national organization as a participant and past chair of the commissions on Practice Enhancement and Quality, and currently serves on the Governmental Affairs commission. She has served the state of North Carolina with 13 years of service to the Division of Medical Assistance Advisory Board and the North Carolina Institute of Medicine.

Dr. Smith has served on numerous committees and boards throughout her career, and most recently enhanced her participation dedicating services devoted toward the treatment of substance abuse

disorders, health care reform initiatives, and onsite education experience for learners in health care. She worked with the Alliant Quality Improvement Organization to engage and assist other doctors toward success with the Merit Incentive Payment System as part of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015. She served on advisory groups for the Office of the National Coordinator and CMS Quality Payment Program as a physician champion. She is very active in health care transformation with leadership in a physician-led accountable care organization. She is engaged in global health care as demonstrated with direct support of mission work abroad and support for the education and training of doctors worldwide. Dr. Smith is recognized as North Carolina Family Physician of the year in 2016 and American Academy of Family Physician of the year in 2017. She is married to Michael Hendricks, and they have four children, Marcus, Marquise, Mikara, and Michaela.



Ish Bhalla, MD, MS is the Associate Medical Director for Behavioral Health Value Transformation Blue Cross NC. He is a graduate of Case Western Reserve University (BS), University of Toledo College of Medicine (MD), and UCLA (MS in Health Policy and Management). Dr. Bhalla completed residency and fellowship training at Yale University, is board certified in Adult and Forensic Psychiatry, and is an alum of the National Clinician Scholars Program at UCLA. He has a strong interest in the delivery of value based behavioral health care.



Corinna Sorenson PhD, MHSA, MPH is an Assistant Professor in Population Health Sciences at the Duke University School of Medicine, Assistant Professor in Public Policy at the Duke Sanford School of Public Policy, and Core Faculty within the Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy. She is a health services and policy researcher with extensive expertise in value assessment, comparative effectiveness research, drug and device policy, evidence-based medicine, and health policy evaluation. Her interests center on the design, implementation, and evaluation of innovative strategies to enhance value-based care. In this work, she utilizes a multidisciplinary approach to examine how varying financial, behavioral, organizational, social, and political factors influence the uptake of evidence in decision making and the delivery of value-based and preference-sensitive care. Outside of academe, Dr. Sorenson has served in senior research and policy roles in the U.S. and abroad. She has also worked in an advisory capacity for governmental organizations in several countries on the development of national and regional health technology assessment systems.